

## Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAB-01 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

OPR-02 /081 W

----- 032363

R 131316Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4784

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7507

STUTTGART FOR ELG

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E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE CABINET CRISIS: BACK TO SQUARE ONE

REF: BEIRUT 7145

1. SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER HE BEGAN INTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS PRE-PARATORY TO NAMING OF A NEW CABINET, PREMIER-DESIGNATE KARAME APPEARS BE AS FAR AS EVER FROM ACHIEVING THAT OBJECTIVE. STATEMATE BETWEEN PHALANGISTS (AND THEIR CHAMOUNIST ALLIES) -- WHO INSIST ON PHALANGIST PARTICIPATION IN ANY NEW GOVT/AND LEFTIST-MOSLEM STREET COALITION (OF WHICH KAMAL JUMBLATT HAS BECOME MAIN MOUTHPIECE)--WHICH IS EQUALLY ADAMANT ON PHALANGIST EXCLUSION--CONTINUES UNABATED. EFFORTS BY VARIOUS INTERMEDIARIES TO REMOVE THIS MAJOR ROADBLOCK HAVE THUS FAR NOT BORNE FRUIT. BOTH PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL AND CHAMOUN DECLARED CATEGORICALLY JUNE 12 THAT THEY WOULD NOT RPT NOT SUPPORT CABINET THAT DID NOT INCLUDE PHALANGIST REPRESENTATION. JUMBLATT IN PUBLIC, AND APPARENTLY IN PRIVATE AS WELL, REMAINS ADAMANT IN ASSERTING THAT HE AND HIS LEFTIST ALLIES WILL NOT RPT NOT TAKE PART IN NEW GOVT, A TACTIC BY WHICH HE SEEKS TO INDUCE KARAME TO FREEZE OUT PHALANGISTS AS A TRADE-OFF.

2. KARAME, WHO HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THAT THE CABINET FORMING PROCESS WILL REQUIRE AT LEAST ANOTHER WEEK, CONTINUES CONSULT ENERGETICALLY WITH WIDE VARIETY OF OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS AND HAS TO DATE DISPLAYED OUTWARD IMPERTURBABILITY IN PURSUING HIS DIFFICULT TASK. (WE UNDERSTAND HE IS CURRENTLY CONCENTRATING MUCH OF HIS EFFORT ON CONVINCING PHALANGE TO ACCEPT SOME FACE-SAVING FORMULA THAT WOULD INVOLVE THEIR TEMPORARY EXCLUSION FROM NEW CABINET.) PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN KARAME'S ABILITY ULTIMATELY TO PUT TOGETHER A GOVT IS STILL MODERATELY HIGH (WITH MANY BELIEVING THAT HE IS LEBANON'S LAST, BEST HOPE AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE). HOWEVER, SOME SIGNS ARE BEGINNING TO APPEAR THAT PAST OPTIMISM EVINCED BY MANY INFORMED OBSERVERS MAY BE FADING. MOST OF THEM ARE FULLY AWARE THAT UNEASY RELATIVE CALM OF LAST WEEK OR SO IS EXTREMELY TENUOUS AND, IN ABSENCE OF POLITICAL PROGRESS, CAN DETERIORATE SERIOUSLY AND SUDDENLY. RECENT DAYS HAVE WITNESSED CONTINUING LOW LEVEL OF INCIDENTS (ROADBLOCKS, KIDNAPPINGS, SNIPING, ETC.) IN CERTAIN TROUBLE-SPOTS. RECENT ABDUCTION OF LOW-CONFIDENTIAL

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LEVEL CHAMOUNIST FUNCTIONARY (WHO HAS NOT YET TURNED UP AND IS PRESUMED IN SOME GOL CIRCLES TO BE DEAD) PROMPTED PHALANGIST/CHAMOUNIST ARMED ELEMENTS TO TAKE TO STREETS OF HADATH QUARTER MORNING JUNE 13. AT PRESENT, THEY HAVE BEEN PERSUADED BY GOL SECURITY AUTHORITIES TO REOPEN ROADS WHICH THEY HAD BLOCKED. FALL-OUT FROM THIS OR OTHER SIMILAR INCIDENTS, HOWEVER, COULD BRING BEIRUT RIGHT BACK TO LEVEL OF GENERALIZED CLASHES FROM WHICH IT HAS SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY EMERGED DURING PAST WEEK.

3. ALTHOUGH HE SHOWS NO SIGN OF GIVING UP AT THIS TIME, MANY OBSERVERS QUESTION HOW LONG KARAME MAY BE WILLING TO PURSUE HIS EFFORTS, IF OBSTACLES FACING HIM CANNOT BE OVERCOME. IN MEANTIME, MOST OTHER LEBANESE POLITICAL LEADERS--INCLUDING, IT WOULD SEEM, PRES FRANGIE--CONTINUE TO PLAY THEIR INTERNAL POLITICAL GAME ACCORDING TO ITS TRADITIONAL RULES, APPARENTLY WITHOUT REALIZING THAT TO DO SO IS INCREASINGLY IRRELEVANT AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS. THE RECENT EDITORIAL BY AN NAHAR PUBLISHER GHASSAN TUEINI (BEIRUT 7400), WHICH RAISED THE SPECTRE OF A MILITARY COUP, HAS BROUGHT THIS HOME TO MANY LOCAL OBSERVERS.

4. PRES FRANGIE, WHOSE REAL VIEWS AND INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS KARAME ARE BEING QUESTIONED INCREASINGLY IN PRIVATE, ADDED FUEL TO SUCH SPECULATION ON JUNE 11 BY CONVOKING AN OFFICIAL SESSION OF CARETAKER MILITARY CABINET. ALTHOUGH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS DEALT ONLY WITH MUNDANE ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS, THIS MOVE DREW HEATED CRITICISM FROM THE LEFT AS WELL AS KARAME ALLIES RAYMOND EDDE AND SAEB SALAM. ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT, AS SOME OPPONENTS AND CRITICS HAVE CHARGED, THAT THIS MOVE WAS "UNCONSTITUTIONAL", IN CURRENT EXTENDED CABINET CRISIS, IT NEVERTHELESS DID NOTHING TO SOOTHE HIGHLY-CHARGED FEELINGS AMONG THE VARIOUS PROTAGONISTS. WOULD THUS SEEM THAT "POLITICS AS USUAL" IN LEBANON IS GOING TO PROVE MORE AND MORE INEFFICIENT IN APPLYING BANDAIDS TO THIS COUNTRY'S SERIOUS WOUNDS.  
GODLEY

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